

(c) whether Government has considered any other alternative system to dispose of cases;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 39.9 lakh cases in the High Courts, 2.63 crore cases in the Subordinate Courts and 39.7 thousand cases in the Supreme Court were reported pending as on 31.12.2006.

(c) to (e) Government has encouraged alternative modes of disposal which include mediation, negotiation and arbitration. Tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, etc. have been set up to dispose of cases in different areas. With a view to reducing pendency in the courts, Government has taken steps to increase the judge strength from time to time and has extended the term of central assistance to Fast Track Courts for a period of five years beyond 31.3.2005 i.e. upto 31.3.2010. Other measures like grouping of cases involving common question of law and application of Information and Communication Technology in the courts have also been taken. Government has encouraged alternative modes of disposal which include mediation, negotiation and arbitration. The Government proposes to establish Gram Nyayalayas in the rural areas to provide speedy justice and reduce pendency.

Infrastructure facilities for judiciary

2956. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOT: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the entire central share relating to development of infrastructure facilities for judiciary such as construction of court buildings and residential quarters for judges has not been released;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and

(c) by when the balance amount due is likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) A budget provision of Rs.65 crore was made in respect of central share of the assistance for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary for the financial year 2006-07. Release of funds to the States / UTs is made on the basis of furnishing of Utilization Certificates (UCs) by the recipient entities in respect of the funds released to them earlier. On the basis of the UCs furnished by these entities and on the basis of proposals received from a few States, an amount of Rs. 50.19 crore, including Rs. 2 crore in respect of Family Courts, was released to the States/UTs in the financial year 2006-07. Except for the unutilized provision in respect of States in the North Eastern Region, the unutilized portion of the budget provision for the year 2006-07 stands surrendered.

Increase in strength of judges

2957. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to increase the strength of Judges of High Court at Chennai and permanent bench at Madurai in view of large number of pending cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The strength of the High Court is reviewed once in three years. Last review was conducted in the year 2006 in which the Madras High Court did not qualify for increase in their judge strength. Judge strength of the benches of the High Courts, including Madurai Bench, is not reviewed separately as they are an integral part of the High Courts.